

a good many years, and we have worked on a lot of issues. It has such a wide jurisdiction, a wide range of interests and issues. Senator ROCKEFELLER assumed control of the Commerce Committee just this Congress, and I think has done an extraordinary job. I appreciate his leadership. I appreciate the fact that he gave us not only directions but the reins to work in the subcommittee, and then he and the ranking member worked very hard at the full committee to put this piece of legislation together.

It is rare indeed in this day and age to find a piece of legislation that passes the Senate in a record vote, that is a piece of legislation of great consequence, that deals with many issues, some of them controversial, to be passed by the Senate with no negative votes at all. Think of that. No negative votes cast on this bill today.

Would not it be nice if we could see more of that kind of togetherness, coming together on public policy that all of us think is good for this country and its future.

I wanted to again say how proud I am of this legislation and how important it is to this country. I am pleased that this is the next step, an important step, and then we would conference with the House and bring a conference report back, and it will be signed by the President. We will have all done something to advance safety and modernization in aviation in this country; not just for commercial aviation, but for general aviation, which is an increasingly important part of our aviation system.

Madam President, I also want to take this opportunity to say a few words about the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise—DBE—Program and the Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise—ACDBE—Program, or the DBE Programs. As the Senate is well aware, this program was originally enacted by Congress to level the playing field for minority and women contractors working in airport related businesses.

While we have made considerable progress toward that goal over the years, unfortunately a good deal more work remains. The Commerce Committee examined disparity studies documenting the existence of discrimination in public contracting while considering and drafting FAA reauthorization legislation. We concluded that the DBE Program remains necessary to thwart ongoing discrimination and determined that several improvements to the DBE Programs were necessary. I am pleased that the FAA Reauthorization bill includes provisions to adjust the personal net worth calculation for inflation, to require certification training of officials involved in the review of DBE applications, to prohibit excess bonding requirements, and to ensure that retirement savings are not included in the personal net worth calculation.

The evidence of discrimination included in disparities studies makes clear that discrimination against mi-

nority and women owned businesses is still a serious problem in airport-related businesses and beyond. This is unacceptable. The DBE and ACDBE Programs are the only current safeguard against the problems of business discrimination in the airport context. I am encouraged that this bill includes provisions to ensure the continued health of the program and to promote a level playing field within the industry.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT JONATHAN J. RICHARDSON

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, it is with a heavy heart that today I honor U.S. Army Sgt. Jonathan J. Richardson from Bald Knob, AR, and pay tribute to his life and service to our country.

Sergeant Richardson was a fire support specialist who lost his life from wounds suffered when his unit came under fire in Khost Province, Afghanistan. He was a member of the C Company, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and had previously served in Iraq with the same unit. He was never afraid to go where the action was, knowing that the line of fire was where he was needed most.

Sergeant Richardson served both tours with courage and distinction, receiving awards including the Army Commendation Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, and National Defense Service Medal.

Sergeant Richardson graduated from Bald Knob High School in 2004, where he was a talented student and excelled on the football team. His family and friends described him as an honorable man, devoted to his wife and family. These qualities were readily apparent on the battlefield, where his comrades called him "the kind of leader soldiers strive to emulate." He was committed to serving others, and while he could have done a great many things with his young life, he chose to serve our Nation in the military. This commitment to serve is, to me, what makes Sergeant Richardson a true hero.

My thoughts and prayers are with Sergeant Richardson's wife Rachel, parents, Sharon and Jeffery, and all

those who loved him during this heart-breaking time.

As John 15:13 states: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." Sergeant Richardson had the greatest love for his country, and his country will always remember his selfless service.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I rise to bring attention to the crucial role of health care professionals in providing quality health care across our Nation. Other than being a father, grandfather, and husband nothing has been more personally satisfying for me than meeting and caring for patients. As a practicing physician I have seen firsthand the importance of each and every health care practitioner—not just doctors and nurses—in meeting this country's diverse health care needs. I am thankful for the contribution that dedicated health professionals have made to not just my medical practice, but all of our communities.

These professionals are found not only in hospitals and doctor's offices, but everywhere from local schools to athletic training clinics, long-term care facilities to rehabilitation centers, and providing loving care in hospices and private homes. There are more than 100 distinct allied health professions including respiratory therapists, music therapists, athletic trainers, clinical laboratory scientists, radiologic technologists, medical assistants and many others. They provide expert care in a number of therapeutic, diagnostic and preventive services in a multitude of settings. These professionals practice expertise in disease prevention and control, dietary and nutritional services, mental and physical health promotion, rehabilitation, and health systems management. Approximately 6 million individuals are currently serving in allied health professions, representing about 60 percent of the healthcare workforce. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 10 of the 20 fastest growing occupations for 2008–2018 are in the health professions.

As Congress continues to engage in a national debate on health care, I have consistently been offering patient-centered solutions that would allow individuals to access care tailored to their individual needs. Consumer choice, not government coercion, has made goods and services that were once scarce affordable and accessible. For instance, in the past 18 months the number of unique iPhone applications available to consumers has gone from 500 to more than 140,000—with 3 billion applications downloaded. If patients were empowered to take control of their health care spending, it would enable health care professionals to more freely exercise their immense talents—no